

# **New Kirkwood Park Playground Dedicated on City of Wilmington's East Side**

## **Governor Carney, Mayor Purzycki join elected officials and school and community representatives at ribbon-cutting ceremony**

**WILMINGTON, Del.** – The City of Wilmington hosted a dedication ceremony on Tuesday for a new \$339,000 playground in Kirkwood Park on East 11th Street—a project funded jointly by the City, State, and Christina School District. The Park and new playground are popular with students who attend the nearby Stubbs Early Education Center as well as by children and families in the local neighborhood. The improvements to Kirkwood Park are part of the City's multiple-year and multi-million-dollar park enhancements program intended to make all City parks more attractive and enjoyable for residents.

"The future of our city and our state depends on our students' success, and we believe firmly that their success in school and in life depends on their ability to read at a third-grade level," said **Governor John Carney**. "That's why this playground has different stations to encourage reading and learning. Investments being made in the Christina School District, in Kirkwood Park, and in projects across the City of Wilmington represent our hopes and aspiration for all children. These young students are our future."

In opening the new playground, Mayor Mike Purzycki was joined by Delaware Governor John Carney, City Council Member Zanthia

Oliver, City Parks and Recreation Director Ian Smith, Senator Darius Brown, and Christina School District Superintendent Dan Shelton, along with other school and community representatives.

The new playground was renovated by Landscape Structures/General Recreation and boasts several features that promote childhood literacy. These include a Custom Reading Shade section for public storybook readings and talking point panels developed by Too Small to Fail, a Clinton Foundation organization that promotes early brain and language development. The new Kirkwood Park playground also features a new Venti net climbing play structure that children can enjoy with their families, along with other “safe, age-appropriate and ability appropriate” play equipment.

“Research shows that simple, daily interactions like talking, reading, and singing with children from birth can boost their early brain and language development. Too Small to Fail is proud to partner with the City of Wilmington and Kirkwood Park Playground to help spark learning and language-rich moments between children and families through play,” said Too Small to Fail Director Jane Park. “This partnership is a powerful example of what’s possible when communities come together to help support families and set young children up for success in kindergarten and in life.”

Mayor Purzycki thanked the Governor, school district officials, Senator Brown, and Representative Stephanie T. Bolden for providing additional funding to support the City’s appropriation to improve Kirkwood Park.

“The new Kirkwood Park Playground is a welcome addition to Wilmington’s East Side and the Brandywine Creek education campus that also includes Stubbs Early Education Center and Howard High School,” said Senator Darius Brown, D-Wilmington. “I want to commend the City of Wilmington and the State of Delaware for making a strong investment in our community and

our young people to create an inviting center of fun and learning that extends from Clifford Brown Walk to the Al O. Plant Bridge. Projects like this help to give our neighborhoods a sense of place and lift up families striving to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children.”

“Part of being a strong advocate for our youth is supporting the communities in which we work and live,” said Rep. Stephanie T. Bolden. “These renovations come at a crucial time for families who struggle to find beautiful amenities to enjoy, locally during a pandemic. As a retired teacher, I’m really a huge fan of the Custom Reading Shade section for public storybook readings. Every child deserves to play in a safe, clean, and fun environment, and Kirkwood Park playground will serve families for years to come.”

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